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Tobacco Smoking Among School Children in Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tobacco smoking is an important problem among schoolchildren. The authors studied the patterns of tobacco smoking among schoolchildren in Colombo, Sri Lanka, using a self-administered questionnaire. Multistaged stratified random sampling was used to select 6000 students. Response rate was 90.7% (5446), out of which 53.4% were males. Prevalence rates for males and females, respectively, were as follows: having smoked at least 1 complete cigarette: 27.0% and 13.3%, smoked more than 100 cigarettes: 2.3% and 0.3%, daily smoking: 1.8% and 0.2%. Mean age of starting to smoke was 14.16 years. The tobacco products most used were cigarettes (91.5%) and bidis (3.8%). In univariate analysis, male gender, parental smoking, studying non-science subjects, peer smoking, and participating in sports were significantly associated with smoking of at least 1 complete cigarette ($P < .05$). In multivariate analysis, the most significant correlates were having close friends (odds ratio = 3.29, confidence interval = 2.47–4.37) or parents who smoked (odds ratio = 1.86, confidence interval = 1.28–2.71). Female smoking has increased from previously reported values. These high-risk groups can be targets for preventive programs.

Keywords

adolescence tobacco smoking; female smoking; initiation of adolescent smoking; peer influence in smoking; socioeconomic determinants of adolescent smoking

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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